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U.S. PATENT APPLICATION

FOR A

DISPOSABLE SHOPPING CART HANDLE SANITARY COVER

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FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to shopping carts, and more particularly to shopping cart handle sanitary covers.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Most of the public buys groceries at supermarkets. Probably just about everyone has grabbed one of the shopping carts at a supermarket and pushed it around while buying groceries and other items. The handle or grip of the shopping cart is tubular in shape and is normally made from a tubular metal or plastic product. Everyone else that has previously used the shopping cart grabs the grip at the same place while pushing the shopping cart.

Because the shopping carts will be used for years and because the shopping carts are either never cleaned or not cleaned in a sanitary manner, germs can be passed from one shopper to the next. In other words, a person using the shopping cart previously may have had a communicable disease. Shoppers using that same cart thereafter will be grabbing the same shopping cart grip in the same manner as the person who had the communicable disease.

Young children and infants are especially at risk as they are placed in the seat of the shopping cart where they inevitably put their mouths on the grip or put their

hands in their mouths after having them on the grip. As medical science tells us, many diseases are susceptible to being transmitted by hand contact, such as staff and strep bacteria and numerous flu viruses.

- 5 In the past, the only feasible thing a shopper could do is to bring something to wipe off the grip of the shopping cart prior to use.

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DISCLOSURE OF THE INVENTION

5 A cart grip sanitary cover is provided having multiple layers each with a top face, a bottom face, and a periphery formed therebetween. The bottom face of each layer has adhesive formed thereon for adhering to a top face of an adjacent layer therebeneath. The layers are stacked with a bottommost layer being attachable to a grip of a cart. In use, a topmost layer of the sanitary cover is removable for exposing
10 another layer therebeneath for providing a sanitary surface to be gripped by a user.

In one embodiment, the layers may each be flexible and formed of an elastomeric material (i.e. plastic, rubber, etc.). As an option, the layers of the sanitary cover may be stacked so that the peripheries thereof are in alignment.

15 In another embodiment, the layers of the sanitary cover may each have a rectangular configuration. Further, the layers of the sanitary cover may each have an area substantially similar to an area of the grip of the cart. Still yet, the layers of the sanitary cover may each have a substantially similar shape and size.

20 In still another embodiment, a non-adhesive covering may be positioned on the bottom face of the bottommost layer of the sanitary cover for protecting the adhesive of the bottommost layer. Such non-adhesive covering may be removable for attachment of the adhesive of the bottommost layer of the sanitary cover to the
25 grip of the cart.

In still yet another embodiment, a dispensing container may be provided for storing a plurality of the sanitary covers. Such dispensing container may include an opening for dispensing the sanitary covers therefrom.

As an option, the cart may include a shopping cart, or any other cart-like device with a grip.

A method is also provided for affording a sanitary surface on a grip of a cart.

5 Initially, a sanitary cover similar to that described hereinabove is attached to a grip of a cart. Next, a topmost layer of the sanitary cover is removed for exposing another layer therebeneath for providing a sanitary surface for being gripped by a user.

10 In another embodiment, a cart grip sanitary cover formed of a single layer is provided with a top face, a bottom face, and a periphery formed therebetween. The bottom face of the sanitary cover has adhesive formed thereon. Further, a non-adhesive covering is positioned on the bottom face of the sanitary cover for protecting the adhesive. Such non-adhesive covering is adapted for being removed
15 for attachment of the adhesive to a grip of a cart. For providing an optimal sanitary surface, the sanitary cover has an area substantially similar to an area of the grip of the cart.

These and other advantages of the present invention will become apparent upon
20 reading the following detailed description and studying the various figures of the drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The foregoing and other aspects and advantages are better understood from
5 the following detailed description of a preferred embodiment of the invention with
reference to the drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a shopping cart equipped with a sanitary
cart grip cover, in accordance with one embodiment.

Figure 2 is a close-up perspective view of the sanitary cart grip cover of
Figure 1.

Figure 3 is a top plan view of the sanitary cart grip cover of Figure 1.

Figure 4 illustrates a cross-sectional view of the cart grip sanitary cover taken
along line 4-4 of Figure 3.

Figure 5 illustrates a close-up side view of the sanitary cover prior to being
20 attached to the grip of the cart, in accordance with one embodiment.

Figure 6 illustrates an alternate embodiment sanitary cover including a single
layer.

Figure 7 illustrates an optional dispensing container that may be used to
25 dispense any of the embodiments set forth hereinabove.

Figure 8 illustrates a method for affording a sanitary surface on a grip of a
cart, in accordance with one embodiment.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Figure 1 illustrates a shopping cart 100 including a basket portion 102 having
5 a bottom 104 and a plurality of sides 106 coupled thereto and extending upwardly
therefrom. The basket portion 102 thus defines an interior space 108 for storing
articles therein. Also included is a plurality of wheels coupled to the bottom 104 of
the shopping cart 100 for transporting purposes.

10 The shopping cart 100 further includes a handle assembly 110 having a pair
of substantially vertical posts 112 with inboard ends coupled to the sides 106 of the
shopping cart 100 and extending upwardly and rearwardly therefrom. Associated
therewith is a substantially horizontal handle 114 coupled to outboard ends of the
posts 112. Such handle 114 further includes a grip 116 for being handled by a user
15 to maneuver the shopping cart 100.

In one embodiment, the grip 116 includes a substantially tubular
configuration and is constructed from a plastic material. In various other
embodiments, the grip 116 may be constructed from a separate or integral metallic or
20 elastomeric piece, or any other material with any desired type of configuration that is
capable of being gripped by a user.

While a shopping cart 100 is specifically described, it should be noted that
the principles set forth herein may be applied in the context of any cart-like device.
25 For example, an airport luggage cart, any cart used by multiple users, or any other
cart-like device may be considered within the scope of the present invention.

As shown in Figure 1 and more particularly in Figures 2 and 3, also included
is a cart grip sanitary cover 118 having multiple layers 120 each with a top face, a
30 bottom face, and a periphery formed therebetween. The layers 120 are stacked one

on top of another with a bottommost layer **121** being attached to the grip **116** of the cart **100**. In use, a topmost layer **122** of the sanitary cover **118** is removable for exposing another layer **120** therebeneath for providing a sanitary surface for being gripped by a user. Thus, each user of the cart **100** is provided with a new sanitary surface to grip **116** during use.

Figure 4 illustrates a cross-sectional view of the cart grip sanitary cover **118** taken along line 4-4 of Figure 3. As shown, the layers **120** of the sanitary cover **118** may be stacked so that the peripheries thereof are in alignment. Further, the layers **120** of the sanitary cover **118** may each have a substantially similar shape and size. Of course, the sizes and shapes may be altered per the desires of the user.

In one embodiment, each layer **120** may have a thickness of less than $1/16^{\text{th}}$ of an inch or, even more preferably, less than $1/32^{\text{nd}}$ or $1/64^{\text{th}}$ of an inch. By this design, any large number of layers **120** may be included without substantially augmenting the diameter of the grip **116**.

Still yet, the layers **120** of the sanitary cover **118** may each have an outer surface area and length substantially similar to an area and length of the grip **116** of the cart **100**, respectively, for providing optimal sanitary protection. In one embodiment, this similarity may range between 50% - 150% of the area and length of the grip **116** of the cart **100**. Of course, this design may be varied per the desires of the user.

As an option, antibacterial agents or other types of sanitizing substances may be used to lace the layers **120** of the sanitary cover **118**. This feature may be used to further enhance the sanitary function of the sanitary cover **118**.

Figure 5 illustrates a side view of the sanitary cover **118** prior to being attached to the grip **116** of the cart **100**, in accordance with one embodiment. As

shown in Figure 5, each of the layers **120** is equipped with a smooth planar top face, a smooth planar bottom face, and a rectangular periphery formed therebetween. The bottom face of each layer **120** has adhesive **500** formed on an entire surface thereof for adhering to a top face of an adjacent layer **120**.

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A bottommost layer **121** has a non-adhesive covering **502** on the bottom face thereof for protecting the adhesive of the bottommost layer **121**. As an option, the non-adhesive covering may have an area and a length substantially similar to an area and length of the remaining layers **120** set forth hereinabove. Moreover, the non-adhesive covering may be constructed of waxed paper or any other suitable material.

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In use, a topmost layer **122** of the sanitary cover **118** is removable for exposing another layer **120** therebeneath for providing a sanitary surface for being gripped by a user.

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Figure 6 illustrates an alternate embodiment **600** including a single layer **602**. A bottom face of such single layer **602** has adhesive **606** formed thereon. Further, a non-adhesive covering **608** similar to the one of Figure 5 is positioned on the bottom face of the present embodiment for protecting the adhesive **606**. Such non-adhesive covering **608** is adapted for being removable for attachment of the adhesive **606** of the present embodiment to a grip **116** of the cart **100**.

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The present embodiment is thus adapted for being applied to a grip **116** of the cart **100** one by one, and disposed after use. In the alternative, the present embodiment may be applied one after another, leaving previous layers on the grip **116** of the cart **100**.

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Figure 7 illustrates an optional dispensing container **700** that may be used to dispense any of the embodiments set forth hereinabove. As shown, such dispensing container is equipped with a substantially rectangular configuration including a

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bottom face **702**, a top face **704**, and a plurality of side faces **706** formed therebetween. An interior space is thus defined for storing the sanitary covers **118** and/or **600**. Further, the top face **704** of the dispensing container **700** includes an opening **708** for dispensing the sanitary covers **118** and/or **600** therefrom.

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As such, the sanitary covers **118** and/or **600** are each dispensable from the dispensing container **700** and the associated non-adhesive covering is removable for attachment of the associated adhesive to the grip **116** of the cart **100**.

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Figure **8** illustrates a method **800** for affording a sanitary surface on a grip **116** of the cart **100**, in accordance with one embodiment. Initially, in operation **802**, a sanitary cover **118** similar to that described hereinabove is removed from a dispenser like that shown in Figure **7** or any other type of dispenser. Next, in operation **804**, the non-adhesive covering is removed for exposing an adhesive layer on a bottommost one of the layers **120** or, in the embodiment of a single layer, exposing an adhesive layer on the single layer.

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Next, in operation **806**, the sanitary cover **118** is attached to the grip **116** of the cart **100**. This may be accomplished by wrapping the sanitary cover **118** around the grip **116** of the cart **100**, and adhering it thereto.

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Then, in the embodiment of Figure **5** including multiple layers **120**, a top layer may be removed at any time for exposing another layer therebeneath for providing a sanitary surface to be gripped by a user. See operation **808**. As an option, a corner, side or edge of each layer **120** may be equipped with a tab or some other non-adhesive member that may be gripped by a user to facilitate the removal process. This operation may be continued until a bottommost layer **121** is exposed, after which a new sanitary cover **118** may be dispensed and applied to the grip **116** of the cart **100**.

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As will be understood from the above, the present invention provides a simple and effective means for covering or shielding the grips of carts **100** and the like to prevent contamination of the user of such carts **100** with disease or infectious residues left from previous users of the cart **100**. Various improvements and
5 alternative arrangements for the basic arrangement of such cover to be attached or placed over the cart grip are disclosed.

While various embodiments have been described above, it should be understood that they have been presented by way of example only, and not
10 limitation. Thus, the breadth and scope of a preferred embodiment should not be limited by any of the above-described exemplary embodiments, but should be defined only in accordance with the following claims and their equivalents.